

Ziziphus jujuba
Jujube, Chinese Red Date



Ziziphus jujuba (Chinese jujube) belongs to the Rhamnaceae family and was already cultivated around 9000 BC. Because of this extremely long history of cultivation, it is difficult to determine the species' exact place of origin. It is generally assumed that it occurs naturally in a region stretching from Lebanon to northern India and central China. The tree is also found in southeastern Europe. Due to its remarkable adaptability, *Ziziphus jujuba* is grown throughout many Asian countries, and with around four hundred known cultivars the edible fruits are widely produced commercially. The Chinese jujube becomes a small to medium sized, irregular and semi open tree about eight to ten meters tall and six meters wide.

The most striking feature of *Ziziphus jujuba* is its distinctive zigzag branching pattern, with one or two thorns at the base of each leaf. The dark gray brown bark is deeply and irregularly furrowed. The elongated, oval leaves emerge light green and turn glossy dark green in summer. As in *Heptacodium miconioides* the leaves have three prominent main veins. The leaf margins are serrated and the texture is rough. The species produces inconspicuous yellow flowers at the end of April and the beginning of May, usually in pairs or clusters of three. In autumn, fleshy edible drupes develop, turning from green to red and eventually black brown when ripe. At full maturity they become wrinkled like dates.

This beautiful and characterful plant has limited winter hardiness and is therefore best suited to sheltered sites and warm microclimates. Temperatures down to twelve degrees below zero are tolerated. Patios and protected gardens are ideal locations. The Chinese jujube is also used in food forests. For good fruit production, sufficient warmth and moisture are required. However, both cooler mountain climates and desert environments are no problem as long as there is adequate groundwater. *Ziziphus jujuba* grows well on all acidic to slightly calcareous soils that are well drained.

TYPES OF PLANTING

Tree types: standard trees, multi-stemmed trees, characteristic trees, fruit trees | **Topiary on stem**: multi-stem umbrella

USE

Location: park, in containers, roof garden, large garden, cemetery, coastal area | **Pavement**: none | **Planting concepts**: food forest, urban planting

CHARACTERISTICS

Crown shape: rounded | **Crown structure**: open | **Height**: 6 - 10 m | **Width**: 5 - 9 m | **Winter hardiness zone**: 8A - 11B

ASPECTS

Wind: tolerant to wind, tolerant to coastal wind | **Soil**: loess, light clay, sand, loamy soil | **Nutrient level**: moderately rich in nutrients | **Soil moisture level**: dry, moist | **Light requirements**: sun | **pH range**: acidic, neutral, alkaline | **Host plant/forage plant**: bees, humans | **Extreme environments**: tolerant to dryness

PLANTKENMERKEN

Flowers: star-shaped, small | **Flower colour**: yellow-green | **Flowering period**: May - June | **Leaf colour**: green | **Leaves**: deciduous, ovate, lanceolate, matt polished, serrate | **Autumn colour**: pale yellow | **Fruits**: striking, edible, drupe | **Fruit colour**: red-brown | **Bark colour**: cream, pink | **Bark**: deeply furrowed | **Twig colour**: grey-brown | **Twigs**: thorned